Steps for protection and development of tea industry

2939. SHRI S.K. KHABIRUDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government of India for protection and development of tea industry;

(b) whether Government have studied the recommendations of Government of West Bengal and interacted with the stake holders of tea industry; and

(c) if so, what is the outcome?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Government has taken a number of measures to help the tea industry. The additional duty of excise of Re.1 ker kg on tea has been withdrawn in the Union Budget for 2005-06. A Special Tea Term Loan (STTL) for the tea sector exists which envisages restructuring/rephasing of irregular portion of outstanding term/working capital loans in the tea sector with repayment over 5 to 7 years and a moratorium of 1 year to small tea growers and bought leaf factories,which is extended on a case to case basis for large tea growers. The STTL also provides for working capital upto Rs.2 lakhs at a rate not exceeding 9% to small growers. The other measures taken to help the tea industry include setting up of a special fund with collections of additional duty of excise on tea of Re.1per kg during the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 for the long term development and modernisation of the tea plantation sector, implementation of a price subsidy scheme for small tea growers for a four month period from February to May, 2004, implementation of a price sharing formula between small tea growers and manufacturers of tea w.e.f. 1.4.2004, implementation of an IT based Information Dissemination Plan for the tea industry including conversion of manual auction centres into electronic auction centres which is expected to improve the efficiency of the tea purchase systems and reduce transaction time and costs etc.

(b) and (c) The Government of West Bengal had forwarded a copy of the Report of the Committee constituted by the State Government to study the crisis in tea industry. The recommendations of the Committee have been examined by the Government and the comments of the Central Government on various recommendations have been sent to the

Government of West Bengal. Many of the issues highlighted in the Report of the Committee have also been deliberated in detail during the stakeholders' conference on tea held in New Delhi on 16th and 17th September, 2004. A Tea Advisory Committee has been set up to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan prepared to follow up the recommendations that emerged at the conference.

Price subsidy scheme for small tea growers

2940. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government introduced price subsidy scheme for small tea growers for a period of four months; and

(b) if so, how many growers benefited from the scheme and how much money was spent for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Approximately 48,600 growers have benefited from the scheme. An amount of Rs.20.86 crores has been disbursed as subsidy as on date.

Invoking Anti-Dumping Clause against Chinese silk

2941. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to invoke the anti-dumping clause against the Chinese silk industry to protect the interests of India's domestic silk industry;

(b) whether Government have taken up the issue with the WTO and also on a bilateral basis with the Chinese Government;

(c) if so, what is the response of the Chinese Government;

(d) what steps Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (d) On the basis of an application filed by the cottage/filature/multiend silk reelers associations